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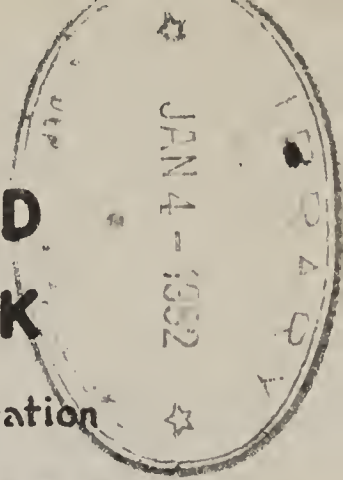
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# BEST EWE LAMBS NEEDED FOR REPLACEMENT STOCK

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Selection of ewe lambs from the flock is often the safest and least expensive means of securing replacement ewes and increasing flock numbers. Sheep numbers in many flocks have been reduced as producers have sent all lambs to market without keeping or buying replacement breeding stock. As a result, these flocks are now composed of older ewes. Losses from death and culling due to advanced age and unsoundness are higher than usual. Prices of lamb and wool are now at levels that are favorable for profitable sheep production. Farmers and ranchers all over the country are attempting to start or to increase flocks, while sheep numbers have been lower in the United States during the past five years than at any time in history. This makes it difficult and expensive to obtain replacement ewes.

By selecting ewe lambs from his flock, the producer can keep the best lambs, while it is often difficult to buy the best from other flocks. He can be sure of better adaptability to local range conditions, and he is in a better position to select ewe lambs for wool and lamb production when his replacements come from within his own flock. Furthermore, he avoids the danger of introducing disease or parasites.

## SAVE LAMBS FROM BEST EWES

If only part of the flock is used to produce replacements, the best ewes should be sorted out for this purpose. Only rams with the best prospects for transmitting to their offspring the best qualities of lamb and wool production should be used in siring replacement ewes.

Lambs with open faces (free from wool blindness) should be favored in selecting replacement ewes because it has been shown that open-faced ewes produce more pounds of lamb than ewes with covered faces.

Heavy weaning weight and good mutton conformation should be emphasized because as much as two-thirds of the income from sheep as a rule comes from the sale of lambs for slaughter. Large size is important in breeding ewes since heavy ewes produce more lambs and more pounds of lamb than small, light ewes.

Long staple fleece and heavy weaning weight of lambs are related to heavy, clean wool production at yearling and later ages. Avoiding extreme fleece grades in selecting replacements will lead to a more uniform wool clip which will often sell at better prices.

## SELECT FOR TWINS

Ewes that have twins produce far more pounds of lamb than ewes that have singles. Studies have shown that twins from young mothers are more likely to produce twins than twins from older mothers. Next highest in twin production are singles from young mothers, which excel single ewes from older mothers. These differences are not great, but the economic importance of the greater lamb production of ewes that produce twins indicates that they deserve attention in selection.

These things are important in selecting replacement ewes:

- ✓ Select sires and dams for replacement stock on production traits -- namely, high lamb and wool production.
- ✓ Select ewe lambs with open faces.
- ✓ Select big, heavy ewe lambs with good mutton conformation.
- ✓ Select ewe lambs with long staple for heavier and more valuable fleeces.
- ✓ Cull ewe lambs with extreme grades of wool, because uniform wool clips sell better than clips of mixed grades.
- ✓ Favor twin lambs first, then single lambs from young mothers, because they are usually superior to single lambs from old ewes for twin production. Place more emphasis on type of birth than on weights, as twins generally overcome most of their weight disadvantage by yearling age.
- ✓ Retain enough ewe lambs in the flock each year to replace those that die and those that are culled for old age, unsoundness and low production.



